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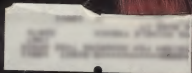
TALKING HEADS

Is America's
Best Band
Byrned Out?

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ARE FOUR HEADS BETTER THAN ONE?

The world's smartest rock group talks about confronting the David Byrne media blitz
BY DAVID HANDELMAN

TINA WEYMOUTH RECENTLY HAD TWO NIGHTMARES ABOUT TALKING HEADS. First she dreamed that she missed all the rehearsals for a tour because David Byrne had advertised them in the newspaper. When she finally arrived, the room was full of musicians, half of whom were novices at their instrument. Byrne asked where she had been. "David," she told him, "you know I don't read the paper."

Then she dreamed that the band went out onstage and didn't play a note. Just stood there. After three songs like this, the whole audience got up and left. Tina said, "Oh, my God, this is terrible! What an abysmal show! We didn't even play a note!" But the next day the papers all raved; critics said the show was brilliant, a display of genius, conceptually perfect.

"Even in my dreams," explains the wry, angel-faced bassist, "David could do no wrong."

"I'VE NEVER TAKEN A LIMBO TO CBGB'S BEFORE," SAYS TINA'S HUSBAND and college sweetheart, Chris Frantz. The drummer looks out the tinted window at a run-down building in New York's Bowery. "Hey, there's Debbie Harry's old apartment."

But Talking Heads have been silent for most of this cramped ride to a photo shoot at the one-time biker bar that helped launch them eleven

years ago. It's December, and they haven't worked together as a foursome since March, when they made some videos for the album *True Stories*. Meaning, not since the release of lead singer David Byrne's film *True Stories* and the ensuing media blitz, which was capped by a *Time* cover story that called Byrne ROCK'S RENAISSANCE MAN.

That's the one in which composer Philip Glass was quoted as saying, "The Talking Heads will go on . . . [but] for many of us, it's the other ways in which David will be developing that will be the most interesting." There are signs that Byrne agrees: the group hasn't recorded together in a year and a half or played live in three years. Though the others are itching to tour, Byrne has been noncommittal. And the group seems edgy.

Earlier, lounging around the photographer's studio, Frantz was leafing through a newspaper. He stopped at a concert review: "Hey, David, you're called a master in here. Listen, Peter Gabriel can be compared to only a few other masters - David Bowie and David Byrne." Byrne smiled bashfully and looked at the ground. Weymouth said, joking, "David Bowie, David Byrne, David Berkowitz."

Tension is nothing new for Talking Heads. Blame it on artists' temperaments - keyboard-guitar man Jerry Harrison was an art major at Harvard, the others went to the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD CORMAN

Talking Heads back at CBGB (from left): Harrison, Weymouth, Byrne and Frantz



TALKING HEADS

'We didn't want to go through it,' Chris Frantz says of the movie 'True Stories.'

I mean, what are we, gluttons for punishment? Human doormats? He laughs.

—but since the band's inception there have been constant quarrels: about musical input, about credit, about press attention, about album covers, about power. And the last time they played a concert, Byrne was so miffed by imperfections in the performance he walked offstage three times in the middle of songs.

Even the pose for this photo shoot was an issue. David wanted to be in glazer jeans; Jerry suggested David play Father Time, while the other three dressed in diapers. Tina, a Bon Jovi fan, wanted to dress up as a heavy-metal band. Chris, typically, just wanted it to be "fun—we don't wanna look like old Talking Heads."

So they ended up back on the Lower East Side at CBGB (Jerry's idea), wearing the leather boots and jackets they wore in art school (Tina's idea), Tina's hair braided like in the old days. "We're starting all over again," says Tina, half-gung-ho, half-melancholy. No one replies; her words seem too acute. For this is no simple return from vacation; the band's future is as uncertain as at any time in its history. During the hiatus, Byrne's film and outside projects with high-profile artists (types like Robyn, Wilson, Twyla Tharp and Philip Glass have made him a trans-media darling, the kind of rock star *The New York Times* and *Esquire* find acceptable).

It's not just the public that's beginning to perceive the band as "David Byrne and the Talking Heads."

"We kept pleading for mercy," Tina says, "but David himself was unable to put a stop to it. Why did it happen? Because David assumed credit for everything that ever happened in Talking Heads. And we allowed that to happen."

In the beginning, the tension was put to good use. It was in this grungy, graffiti-dense bar that they had come out in tennis shirts and jeans and played their quirky, rhythmic music for a punk crowd, Byrne's clenched vocals and the band's stripped-down sound working against pop-song structures. They played three-day weekends once a month, trading off sets with an array of soon-to-be-discovered New Wave talent like Patti Smith, the Ramones, Blondie and Television. But unlike those bands, the Heads didn't fade away, drug out, get stuck in cult status, die a fashion death, or fade with ego clashes. They stuck together as their popularity slowly grew and as their sound deepened from psycho-punk to African polyrhythms to their recent homespun melodies.

They survived the threat of Brian Eno, who came aboard to produce *More Songs About Buildings and Food* (1978), by the time of *Rescue in Light* (1980), he and Byrne had usurped leadership of the band; the others, reduced to recording riffs for tape loops, felt threatened and useless. So afterward the Franzes and two of Tina's sisters, calling themselves the Tom Tom Club, went off to make a goofy white rap record—which promptly outsold all previous Heads albums. Harrison made a less-accessible solo album, *The Red and the Black*.

When the group reassembled, it was with a new confidence and independence. In 1983, the Heads poured as a nine-piece, sexually and racially integrated band; they found a way to fuse the funk they had always admired with the heady alienation that had been their spark. But more than ever before, Byrne, with his weird, prismatic dances—all jitter and shivers, wiggling and chicken-necking his way to catharsis—became the focal point of the group. And during the weeks preced-

ing the filming of their concert documentary *Stop Making Sense*, Byrne became so obsessed with perfection that he would push band members into the correct stage position and, instead of singing lyrics, sing, "Somebody forgot to turn out the lights...."

The next band project was to be Byrne's film *True Stories*, a feature set in Texas, based on many tabloid clippings. But as Byrne's script slowly took shape, the three other Heads realized that unlike making music, the responsibilities couldn't be equally divided.

"It was quite clear that there were going to be many headaches and much blood, sweat and tears," says Chris. "In the end, it would still be David's movie. We didn't want to go through it. I mean, what are we, gluttons for punishment? Human doormats?" He laughs.

During production of the movie, it seemed logical that they branch out again. The Franzes moved to Connecticut and worked on a third Tom Tom Club album; Harrison went home to Milwaukee, produced an album for Violent Femmes and started a second solo album. But unlike Byrne, the others had to think twice about where they followed their muse. As Harrison says, "When David makes a record outside the band, it almost behaves him to make it noncommercial. That only adds to his mystique. He is already given the lion's share of the credit for Talking Heads' becoming commercial. Whereas Chris, Tina or I, we have a different agenda. For us to continue making records, they have to have a commercial life."

They were interrupted in spring 1985, when Byrne asked them to come in and record a new batch of uncharacteristically sweet and melodic songs he had written, half of which would be instrumental tracks for songs actors would sing in his movie, the rest to be released as a studio album called *Little Creatures*.

"The idea didn't go down so well," admits Byrne, "but then pretty much everybody liked the songs." The others felt the Heads should be first priority. "They weren't really Talking Heads albums," Tina says. "The songs were fun to play, they were done very sincerely, but it was just 'Let's play anything so we can be a band again.'"

While they were rehearsing, Byrne told them *The New York Times Magazine* was doing a piece about the band. "It was a very big deal," recalls Chris. "We spent hours and hours with this guy and went to these photo sessions, not knowing that the day before, David had a separate session with the same photographer. We were told when the article was coming out, so we went to the newsstand to buy it, and here's this article on David and what a genius he is ('Thinking Man's Rock Star,' May 5th, 1985). I mean, there was a picture of us and a couple of quotes, but so still that's dirty pool! I practically beat him up, I was so mad!"

Byrne remembers it differently—he says the other members of the band knew the story would focus on him. Still, says Chris, "our feelings were hurt, and when it gets down to working with people, and you hurt their feelings, you're in trouble."

Back in earlier, calmer days, the band looked to Lou Reed as a sort of patron saint. He doted on advice like "Get some dynamics in your songs" or "David should wear a long-sleeved shirt—his arms are too hairy." And more profound warnings, which the band still remembers today. Chris: "Lou Reed once told us, 'Man, I've gotta go out on tour again. People want to view the body.'" Tina: "He told us, 'A band is like a fist of many fingers. Whereas record companies like to ego-massage one finger and break it off.'"

"WAAAAH!" THREE-MONTH-OLD MARSHALL EGAN Frantz starts wailing. His mom, with the killer blue eyes, picks up and cuddles his fifteen pounds to no avail. "Poor baby!" she says. "It's his first free time of day." She ends up nursing him throughout the interview; she's wearing a glitzer top and leather skirt she made in 1974. Marshall Egan has a brother, Robin, 4. Tina, 36, plans on having more and taking them all on the road: "Traveling is the best education there is," she says. She should know. An army brat, she moved around a lot—Europe, the eastern and western United States. We talk in Jerry Harrison's loft while Chris explores the new SoHo.

Martina Weymouth is the most outspoken Head: when I introduced myself, she smiled warmly and asked, "Where's your husband?" To join the band, she learned her instrument from scratch. When the band was still a trio, she caused tension by getting as much press as Byrne, for being a woman in a rock & roll band who didn't sing or gyrate.

A few months after the band's first album came out, in the summer of 1977, Chris and Tina married. They cut short their honeymoon—bopping around fifteen-dollar motels on the Georgia coast—for the Heads' first big-time gig, opening for Bryan Ferry at the Bottom Line, in New York. Before that, the band had played any place that paid, including a Beefheart Charlie's, and David, Chris and Tina had shared an apartment on Chrystie Street, around the corner from CBGB.

Nowadays Tina and Chris live on a farm with a pond the local kids call Talking Heads Lake. They also have a small apartment in the Bahamas; they go there to sail. But all they really want is to tour.

"I've made seven albums and two babies in the last five years," Tina says, "but it's not the same as touring. There's something so positive about it.... Not that you're adored, but that you feel euphorically encouraged and completely whole."

She may start writing for the Heads. These past two albums, she says, "I was getting very tightballed about my ideas. I didn't want to offer anything that was going to go to somebody else's credit. And Chris and I were also working out our various insecurities, which had arisen by being lax, by just having fun."

By being "the friendly ones?" "Yeah," she says, softly, with a little edge. "By being the friendly ones. By being the fair ones. By being the loyal ones. By being the ones who didn't want to break anyone's heart. And because we were two, we didn't want to overman any one person. We didn't think that was fair. But that's all over now. It's my fault as much as anyone's, because I allowed this to all happen. It's been resolved, but the damage has been done. Like any first love, when there's been a first fight, there's a sense of betrayal. The only place to go from there is to be a lot more mature from then on. In. But the innocence is gone."

"I don't resent anybody in our band. When I'm on stage, I am in love with everyone on that stage. Whatever may happen outside of it is petty by comparison."

Still, that means Tina hasn't been in love with everyone in three years.

"HEY, JERRY!" SOMEONE YELLS ON THE SCENE STREET. Jerry Harrison looks over his shoulder only to have his picture snapped. The photographer shoots something; Jerry, 37, smiles a fake smile and nods, then turns around. "What was that?" he wonders aloud. "I thought the recognition factor was only [Cuts off 34]"

DAVID HANDSHELMAN'S last article for ROLLING STONE was his story about Bon Jovi in RS 487.

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Talking Heads

David Byrne seems willing to answer questions but unwilling to dig deep.

[Cont. from 34] Manhattan music store, where the walls are lined with photos of famous customers. "When we were starting," says Chris, "I used to come here and stare at the pictures - 'Wow, man, the Byrds!'"

He discovers a miniature drum set and orders one for Robin for Christmas. He wants it in red sparkle but has to settle for maroon. Robin likes to play, but he can't reach Daddy's drums. How about bass? "No," Chris says, explaining, "he says that's for girls."

Chris, 35, shares parental chores with Tina, but he says when he takes Robin to the playground, "all the women look at me funny - 'Is this guy outta work?'" When Tina was pregnant, Chris put on more weight than she did, and he's been fasting a few days to shed it. He is in the studio working on the next Tom Tom Club album, complete with flamenco guitars and heavy-metal riffs. He even plans on singing a few songs.

"I think it'd be pretty funny if I sang on a Talking Heads album. But you know what? It'll probably happen some day if we keep making 'em. Ringo sang quite a few, more than people remember. I just heard 'With a Little Help from My Friends.' That's a good song."

Like Tina, Chris was a traveling army kid—Kentucky, Virginia, high school in Pittsburgh. Like Tina, Chris's paintings at RSD were large abstracts. "I was trying Tina it's time we started painting again. Especially cause we're at an age when we're still considered young painters!" Chris likes to point out how influential the Heads' music is, but says, "Let's face it, they don't call it 'playing' music for nothing." He laughs giddily. "I sort of live," he admits, "for pleasant surprises." Like the success of the Torn Torn Club. It gave Chris and Tina "a little bit more color, not just with the Heads but in our public image or in our own self-esteem."

Chris, who rivals Byrne for Most Fidgety Head, is eager to tour. "I just love to play. I'd really like to be out there and boogie for a while. Someone said the last tour was like passing a kidney stone every night; David would throw a tantrum and start firing people. That's why I'd encourage him to do something simple. It'll be just as much fun for everybody, and more fun for us."

"The road is where David's reputation was built, and . . . Put it this way: a lot of David Byrne's audience is not relating to his movie the way they do when he does 'da-da-da-da' [Chris strokes his forehead four times]. I've seen people walk out on

it. When you get on the cover of *Time*, and there's that much promotion, you slowly but surely begin to lose your grass-roots following. If a politician is on the cover of *Time*, you stop believing him. And the album has sold less than *Little Criminals*. I hate to second-guess things, but...

"David's extremely ambitious. And that's cool. I don't want to get too emotional about it. I'm made to feel like an underachiever, which I'm not."

"One unfortunate thing about David going for himself so much – which is his style now – is that the only reason we might tour is because he needs to, for his image, you know?"

LOOK AT THE GUY WITH THE BROOD!" says David Byrne, laughing heartily. He's in the darkened house of Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, supervising the dress rehearsal of the New York premiere of *The Kneer Plays*, his theatrical collaboration with Robert Wilson. Onstage, behind the ten dancers practicing their curtain calls, a custodian sweeps up with such unselfconscious grace it approaches performance art. Byrne, 34, observes this and is tickled but not condescending. It's similar to the point of view of *True Stories*, a film so slight it ended up reflecting whatever viewers brought to it.

The same can be said for Byrne himself. Not that he is a chameleon, but his unsettling mix of ego and shyness, a sort of Warholian deadpan, enables people to bend him to fit their preconceptions. Born in Scotland, bred in Baltimore, Byrne seems willing to answer questions but unwilling to dig deep. Many have called this unemotional, somehow it seems more . . . necessary.

Tina was surprised the first time she saw him throw a tantrum. She came home to the Chrysis Sooret apartment and found a clock radio smashed to pieces. She asked him, "Did you do this?" Byrne muttered, "Yep." She asked, "Mad about something?" And he said, "Yep. It was broken anyway." He got mad, decided to break something but decided to break something that was already broken. "I wish everybody could have tantrums like that," says Tina.

At RISD, which he quit in his first year, he put on one-man shows, sometimes playing the ukulele. He would sing songs based on the replies to the questionnaires he passed out to his audience or read game-show transcripts as theater. "He was definitely a person-

but he was a very withdrawn person," says Chris. "It took a long time for David to come out of his shell."

Today, at the rehearsal, Byrne is wearing gold-and-black-checked suspenders, a crisp, white button-down and a gray cardigan. He watches the all-brass band run through his witty score while the onstage fare ranges from stunning to pretentious: puppets, Kabuki dances, allegories about imperialism and dancing wicker baskets.

After giving notes to the cast and crew, Byrne and his girlfriend of five years, fashion designer Adelle Lutz (she outfitted the surreal fashion show in *True Stories*), scoot across the street to a coffee shop. As he talks, Byrne's eyes keep darting around the room.

Byrne has read some of the articles about himself. "It gets a little boring reading about how you're from outer space or how you're full of swatches and should be put away. But I can't really complain. I mean, at least they're still writing."

The *Time* cover affected the others more than it affected Byrne. "Slowly, I've seen the effect it's had. Other people think you can be a big shot, walk into a restaurant and boss people around. They keep looking at you to see if you've changed. There's nothing to see."

"It always annoyed me that I had to have myself attached to it — you know, putting the band's faces on the record cover. That's what's generally done, but it confuses the music with somebody's facial features."

Still, Byrne finds the publicity useful. "You wanna reach people you haven't reached before. It's the same drive that led us to play in front of an audience in the first place. As peculiar as our stuff is, it was never geared to turn people off. I was real comfortable with that way of thinking from the start. Some people who approach pop music as an art find that a weird idea." Not that he thinks it isn't art. "I do, but I think that people should like art — enjoy being shocked, puzzled. You don't want 'em to just walk away."

Byrne isn't chosen by Philip Glass's suggestion that his work outside the band is more interesting. "I know what he means, but . . . to me, pop songs are the folk music of high-tech countries. So far anyway, I've felt like if I wanna do a record of songs, Talking Heads is my outlet for that."

What about the perception that it's David Byrne and Talking Heads, as opposed to, say, the Beatles? "The Beatles were a nice myth that everyone wanted to believe in in the Sixties, that there was this wonderful, democratic, egalitarian institution. It wasn't true then, and it's not true now. . . . Because it's a collaboration, no matter how you work it out, everyone feels shafted in some way. You just hope the inequalities even out."

Byrne pauses when [Cont. on 58]

"FROM DEBTS TO RICHES, THE POOR MAN'S ROAD TO WEALTH"

BY DAVID BYRNE AND ADDEL LUTZ



Talking Heads

The band is anxious. 'We're gonna lose our whole audience if we don't tour,' says Tina.

[Cont. from 57] asked if the band has ever come close to breaking up. "Not really. We sometimes have disagreements or squabbles, usually about stuff which is really inconsequential. When we get together and make music, we get along fine, which is what we're about anyway."

JERRY AND TINA WANT THE BAND TO tour first. Chris would like to record an album to support. But David is thinking of making another movie; he apparently has got the Renaissance-man fever, which may be hard to shake in an era when Emilio Estevez is considered an *auteur*. He won't tour unless it's both different from and better than *Stop Making Sense*. This frustrates Harrison, who feels that "our music stands by itself. People enjoy our records and want to see us play."

"We're gonna lose our whole audience if we don't tour," Tina says. If nothing else, Tom Tom Club will tour with Harrison, but that seems a last resort. When the three asked Byrne about touring, he suggested having actors come onstage between songs. "Even actors I talked to didn't want to do that," Tina says. "It would be . . . interesting, but it approximates my nightmare."

Byrne has to overcome a certain fear of the stage. "It is frightening," says Tina, "because he's a kid. I have a four-year-old at home. There's not much difference. You can't ask him to do it out of obligation or duty or love or money, but because it's its own reward. Somewhere along the line, it stopped being its own reward for David.

"Jerry thinks it's because David gets bored, but I think it's because he wants to be so perfect. Sometimes people just get

tired of — how should I say it? Seeking that high and then not finding it. Whether it's in a drug, or whether it's in the perfection of your craft or art. . . . It sounds dumb to say it's growing up, but that's what it is. A band growing up."

THE BAND CROWDS INTO THE SPACE that was once the kitchen at CBGB; all that is left is the exhaust hood and a fluorescent bulb. Every inch is covered with graffiti. They splay themselves across a vinyl couch; Byrne stands up above them and starts deciphering graffiti off the ceiling: "The Serile Delinquents! Ha-ha-ha." The rest of the band has been loosening up, and they laugh along.

Byrne seems the most comfortable with posing; he has done more and knows how to use his weird, geeky look. At one point, he turns sideways and stares off camera. Chris looks up at him and says, "Hey, it's just like that picture of Washington crossing the Delaware." Everyone laughs.

A FEW DAYS AFTER THE SHOOT, TIMA called to say she and Chris had lined up a recording session: Tom Tom Club was going to cover the Velvet Underground's "Femme Fatale." Lou Reed would sing backup and play guitar, and Jerry and David would also play. "We got in such a warm mood," she explained, "seeing each other again after being so dispersed." The Heads were a unit again.

And though Byrne had looked like the general towering above his troops, crossing the Delaware in a rocking rowboat, it seemed he had not forgotten who had taken him to the river and steered him through those swirling, murky waters. ■

Health Affairs 27:1000-1001 (2008)

For information on the use of the
 program, contact the author at
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The following is a summary of the results of the first two steps of the analysis. The first step was to identify the variables that were most strongly associated with the outcome variable. The second step was to identify the variables that were most strongly associated with the outcome variable, controlling for the other variables in the model.

It's hard again to tell the other way up - one going in the other way the other way - and I was a candidate for failure in the attack, that I think I was. There's enough evidence in it.

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On the way home, the two men were seen talking to a woman who was sitting in a car. The woman was seen to be talking to the two men. The woman was seen to be talking to the two men. The woman was seen to be talking to the two men.

smaller, more efficient, and more cost-effective than the traditional approach. The results of the study suggest that the use of a small, efficient, and cost-effective approach is the best way to improve the quality of the data.

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On the part of the bourgeoisie, the two main contradictions are the one between the bourgeoisie itself in the public, and the one between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The first contradiction is the one between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The second contradiction is the one between the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie.

The author is happy to discuss the issues of writing for the public and would be pleased to see the issue of "Improving readability" published. However, many who would like to discuss these differences among the media forms of language, such as those on the Internet, must first have the proper, well-considered, and

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The 11-year-old, seven-month-old son is then too little to go out alone. There will go in the fact that the very thing, the safe thing, the good thing of these individual things. There are no obvious solutions. I have thought of it as saying to me in the terrible, very serious, that you have to think the strength to use the full word in 1986.

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'Beliefs in an afterlife are too consonant with human hopes to think there's proof for them.'

It is important to understand that the results of this study are not generalizable to all populations. The study was conducted in a specific population and the results may not be applicable to other populations. Therefore, the results of this study should be interpreted with caution.

What are the signs of a good manager? I think the one sign is that something that you think is good, it should be good for everyone. If it's good for you, it's good for everyone.

For the first 10 minutes, the students will have a chance to discuss the article.